United Nations ST/IC/2014/27

Secretariat

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Information circular*

To: Members of the staff and other authorized users of information and communications technology resources**

From: The Assistant Secretary-General/Chief Information Technology Officer

Subject: **Internet filter upgrade**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to inform staff members and other authorized users of information and communications technology (ICT) resources about an upgrade of the Secretariat's system that controls access to the Internet, including, but not limited to, the use of the web, e-mail, instant messaging, social and peer-to-peer networking, video and photo sharing, video and audio streaming and voice-over Internet protocol services.

2. The present upgrade is being implemented in accordance with ST/SGB/2004/15 on the use of information and communications technology resources and data in order to preserve and protect ICT resources and data from Internet-borne security threats. These include the inadvertent download and execution of malicious code from, as well as the unauthorized upload of ICT data to, the Internet.

3. In addition, the Internet access control system ("filter") will be used to enforce the existing limitations of permitted personal use of ICT resources, in particular with respect to web access.

4. The Secretariat provides authorized users with access to the Internet in order to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary tools for communication, research, collaboration and other tasks that are required to fulfil their official duties. Authorized users are encouraged to use the Internet to further the goals and objectives of the United Nations and are reminded to adhere to all provisions stipulated in section 3 (on official use) and section 4 (on limited personal use) of ST/SGB/2004/15. It is recalled that the Organization retains all rights related to ICT resources and data (section 6), and that all use of ICT resources and data is subject to monitoring and investigation (section 7).

* The present circular will be in effect until further notice.

** For a definition of authorized users of ICT resources, see ST/SGB/2004/15.

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5. The Internet access filter assigns each website to a category.[1] On the basis of the category of a website, one of the following filtering policy actions will be applied:

(a) Permitted: access to websites in these categories is permitted without any restrictions imposed by the filter;

(b) Permitted, with limitations: access to websites in these categories is permitted with certain restrictions, such as file upload limitations;

(c) Permitted, for legitimate official purposes only: access to websites in these categories is temporarily permitted if required to fulfil official duties;

(d) Permitted, time limited or bandwidth restricted: access to websites in these categories may be subject to bandwidth limitations, or permitted only outside business hours for personal use;

(e) Blocked: access to sites in these categories will be blocked, in accordance with the provisions of ST/SGB/2004/15.

6. In addition, the filter will block access to web pages that have been detected to be distributing malicious software or facilitating other malicious activities, even if the category of the website would otherwise permit access.

7. The upgrade of the Internet access control filter will be performed without service interruption and does not require users to take any action.[2]

[1] A detailed description of categories is provided in the annex to the present information circular.

[2] Staff members using non-standard software or unsupported configurations may be prompted to authenticate (log in) to the system, and required to adjust the configuration of their non-standard software. Detailed instructions can be obtained by contacting the Office of Information and Communications Technology Service Desk.

Annex

Detailed description of categories used for Internet access filtering

The categories used by the Internet access filter are defined by the vendor of the filtering system and cannot be changed. However, the association of a specific site with a given category can be modified, either by requesting the vendor to review the current category, or by defining a specific exception for a site that cannot be reclassified by the vendor.

Whenever access to a website is denied, the system will display a notification page that includes instructions for the user on requesting access through either reclassification or the defining of an exception.

Permitted

Advertisements	Banner and pop-up advertisements that often accompany a web page and other advertising websites that provide advertisement content. Advertising services and sales are classified as "Business and industry".
Alcohol	Alcohol as a pleasurable activity; beer and wine making and cocktail recipes; and liquor sellers, wineries, vineyards, breweries and alcohol distributors. Alcohol addiction is classified as "Health and nutrition". Bars and restaurants are classified as "Dining and drinking".
Arts	Galleries and exhibitions; artists and art; photography; literature and books; performing arts and theatre; musicals; ballet; museums; design; and architecture. Cinema and television are classified as "Entertainment".
Astrology	Astrology, horoscopes, fortune-telling, numerology, psychic advice and tarot.
Auctions	Online and offline auctions, auction houses and classified advertisements.
Business and industry	Marketing, commerce, corporations, business practices, workforce, human resources, transportation, payroll, security and venture capital; office supplies; industrial equipment (process equipment), machines and mechanical systems; heating equipment and cooling equipment; materials handling equipment; packaging equipment; manufacturing: solids handling, metal fabrication, construction and building; passenger transportation; commerce; industrial design; construction, building materials; shipping and freight (freight services, trucking, freight forwarders, truckload carriers, freight and transportation brokers, expedited services, load and freight matching, track and trace, rail shipping, ocean shipping, road feeder services, moving and storage).

Chat and instant messaging	Web-based instant messaging and chat rooms.
Computers and the Internet	Information about computers and software, such as hardware, software, software support; information for software engineers, programming and networking; website design; the web and Internet in general; computer science; computer graphics and clip art. "Freeware and shareware" is a separate category.
Dating	Dating, online personals and matrimonial agencies.
Digital postcards	Enabling the sending of digital postcards and e-cards.
Dining and drinking	Eating and drinking establishments; restaurants, bars, taverns and pubs; and restaurant guides and reviews.
Dynamic and residential	Internet protocol addresses of broadband links that usually indicate attempts of users to access their home network, for example, for a remote session to a home computer.
Education	Education-related, such as schools, colleges, universities, teaching materials and teachers' resources; technical and vocational training; online training; education issues and policies; financial aid; school funding; and standards and testing.
Entertainment	Details or discussion of films; music and bands; television; celebrities and fan websites; entertainment news; celebrity gossip; and entertainment venues. Compare with the "Arts" category.
Fashion	Clothing and fashion; hair salons; cosmetics; accessories; jewellery; perfume; pictures and text related to body modification; tattoos and piercing; and modelling agencies. Dermatological products are classified as "Health and nutrition".
Finance	Primarily financial in nature, such as accounting practices and accountants, taxation, taxes, banking, insurance, investing, the national economy, personal finance involving insurance of all types, credit cards, retirement and estate planning, and loans and mortgages. Stock and shares are classified as "Online trading".
Government and law	Government websites; foreign relations; news and information related to government and elections; information related to the field of law, such as attorneys, law firms, law publications, legal reference material, courts, dockets and legal associations; legislation and court decisions; civil rights issues; immigration; patents and copyrights; information related to law enforcement and correctional systems; crime reporting, law enforcement and crime statistics; the military, such as the armed forces, military bases and military organizations; and anti-terrorism.

Health and nutrition	Health care; diseases and disabilities; medical care; hospitals; doctors; medicinal drugs; mental health; psychiatry; pharmacology; exercise and fitness; physical disabilities; vitamins and supplements; sex in the context of health (disease and health care); tobacco use, alcohol use, drug use and gambling in the context of health (disease and health care); food in general; food and beverages; cooking and recipes; food and nutrition, health and dieting; cooking, including recipe and culinary websites; and alternative medicine.
Humour	Jokes, sketches, comics and other humorous content. Adult humour likely to offend is classified as "Adult".
Infrastructure and content delivery networks	Content delivery infrastructure and dynamically generated content, and websites that cannot be classified more specifically because they are secured or otherwise difficult to classify.
Internet telephony	Telephonic services using the Internet.
Job search	Career advice; résumé writing and interviewing skills; job placement services; job databanks; permanent and temporary employment agencies; and employer websites.
Lingerie and swimsuits	Intimate apparel and swimwear, especially when modelled.
Lotteries	Sweepstakes, contests and State-sponsored lotteries.
Mobile phones	Short message services (SMS); ringtones and mobile phone downloads. Cellular carrier websites are included in the "Business and industry" category.
Nature	Natural resources; ecology and conservation; forests, wilderness, plants and flowers; forest conservation; forest, wilderness and forestry practices; forest management (reforestation, forest protection, conservation, harvesting, forest health, thinning and prescribed burning); agricultural practices (agriculture, gardening, horticulture, landscaping, planting, weed control, irrigation, pruning and harvesting); pollution issues (air quality, hazardous waste, pollution prevention, recycling, waste management, water quality and the environmental clean-up industry); animals, pets, livestock and zoology; biology; and botany.
News	News, headlines, newspapers, television stations, magazines, weather and ski conditions.
Non-governmental organizations	Non-governmental organizations, such as clubs, lobbies, communities, non-profit organizations and labour unions.
Non-sexual nudity	Nudism and nudity; naturism; nudist camps; and artistic nudes.

Online communities	Affinity groups, special interest groups, web newsgroups and message boards. Excludes websites that are classified as "Professional networking" or "Social networking".
Online trading	Online brokerages; websites that enable the user to trade stocks online; information related to the stock market, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, brokers, stock analysis and commentary, stock screens, stock charts, initial public offerings and stock splits. Services for spread betting on stocks and shares are classified as "Gambling". Other financial services are classified as "Finance".
Organizational e-mail	Websites used to access business e-mail (often via Outlook Web Access).
Personal sites	Websites about and from private individuals; personal home page servers; websites with personal content; and personal blogs with no particular theme.
Photo searches and images	Facilitating the storing of and searching for images, photographs and clip art.
Politics	Websites of politicians; political parties; and news and information on politics, elections, democracy and voting.
Professional networking	Social networking for the purpose of career or professional development. See also "Social networking".
Real estate	Information that would support the search for real estate; office and commercial space; real estate listings, such as rentals, apartments and homes; and house building.
Reference	City and state guides; maps; time; reference sources; dictionaries; and libraries.
Religion	Religious content and information about religions; and religious communities.
Software as a service (SaaS) and Business-to-business (B2B)	Web portals for online business services; and online meetings.
Safe for kids	Directed at, and specifically approved for, young children.
Science and technology	Science and technology, such as aerospace, electronics, engineering, mathematics and other similar subjects; space exploration; meteorology; geography; environment; energy (fossil, nuclear and renewable); and communications (telephones and telecommunications).
Search engines and portals	Search engines and other initial points of access to information on the Internet.
Sex education	Factual websites dealing with sex, sexual health, contraception and pregnancy.

Shopping	Bartering; online purchasing; coupons and free offers; general office supplies; online catalogues; and online malls.
Social networking	Social networking. See also "Professional networking".
Social science	Sciences and history related to society: archaeology, anthropology, cultural studies, history, linguistics, geography, philosophy, psychology and women's studies.
Society and culture	Family and relationships; ethnicity; social organizations; genealogy; seniors; and childcare.
Software updates	Websites that host updates for software packages.
Sports and recreation	All sports, professional and amateur; recreational activities; fishing; fantasy sports; public parks; amusement parks; water parks; theme parks; zoos and aquariums; and spas.
Tobacco	Pro-tobacco websites; tobacco manufacturers; and pipes and smoking products (not marketed for illegal drug use). Tobacco addiction is classified as "Health and nutrition".
Transportation	Personal transportation; information about cars and motorcycles; shopping for new and used cars and motorcycles; car clubs; boats, airplanes, recreational vehicles and other similar items. Note that car and motorcycle racing is classified as "Sports and recreation".
Travel	Business and personal travel; travel information; travel resources; travel agents; vacation packages; cruises; lodging and accommodation; travel transportation; flight booking; airfares; car rental; and vacation homes.
Web hosting	Website hosting and bandwidth services.
Web page translation	Translation of web pages between languages.

Permitted, with limitations

File transfer services	File transfer services with the primary purpose of providing download services and hosted file sharing.
Online storage and backup	Offsite and peer-to-peer storage for backup, sharing and hosting.
Web-based e-mail	Public web-based e-mail services. Websites enabling individuals to access their company's or organization's e-mail service are classified as "Organizational e-mail".

Permitted, for legitimate official purposes only

Cheating and plagiarism	Promoting cheating and the selling of written work, such as term papers, for plagiarism.
Computer security	Offering security products and services for corporate and home users.
Extreme	Material of a sexually violent or criminal nature; violence and violent behaviour; tasteless, often gory photographs, such as autopsy photos; photos of crime scenes, crime and accident victims; excessive obscene material; shock websites.
Freeware and shareware	Providing downloads of free and shareware software.
Games	Various card games, board games, word games and video games; combat games; sports games; downloadable games; game reviews; cheat sheets; computer games and Internet games, such as role-playing games.
Hacking	Discussing ways to bypass the security of websites, software, and computers.
Hate speech	Websites promoting hatred, intolerance or discrimination on the basis of social group, colour, religion, sexual orientation, disability, class, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender or gender identity; sites promoting racism, sexism or racist theology; hate music; neo-Nazi organizations; supremacism; and Holocaust denial.
Illegal activities	Promoting crime, such as stealing, fraud, illegally accessing telephone networks; computer viruses; terrorism, bombs and anarchy; and websites depicting murder and suicide, as well as explaining ways to commit them.
Weapons	Information related to the purchase or use of conventional weapons, such as gun sellers, gun auctions, gun classified ads, gun accessories, gun shows and gun training, and general information about guns. Other weapons and graphic hunting sites may be included. Government military websites are classified as "Government and law".

Permitted, time limited or bandwidth restricted

Streaming audio	Real-time streaming audio content, including Internet radio and audio feeds.
Streaming video	Real-time streaming video, including Internet television, web casts and video sharing.

Blocked

Adult	Directed at adults, but not necessarily pornographic. May include adult clubs (strip clubs, swinger clubs, escort services or strippers); general information about sex, non-pornographic in nature; genital piercing; adult products or greeting cards; information about sex not in the context of health or disease.
Child abuse content	Worldwide illegal child sexual abuse content. This category is never displayed.
Filter avoidance	Promoting and aiding undetectable and anonymous web usage, including common gateway interface (CGI), PHP and Glype anonymous proxy services.
Gambling	Casinos and online gambling; bookmakers and odds; gambling advice; competitive racing in a gambling context; sports booking; sports gambling; services for spread betting on stocks and shares. Websites dealing with gambling addiction are classified as "Health and nutrition". Government-run lotteries are classified as "Lotteries".
Illegal downloads	Providing the ability to download software or other materials, serial numbers, key generators and tools for bypassing software protection, in violation of copyright agreements. Torrents are classified as "Peer file transfer".
Illegal drugs	Information about recreational drugs, drug paraphernalia and drug purchase and manufacture.
Parked domains	Websites that monetize traffic from the domain using paid listings from an advertising network, or are owned by "squatters" hoping to sell the domain name for a profit. These also include fake search websites that return paid advertising links.
Peer file transfer	Peer-to-peer file request websites; the file transfers themselves are not tracked.
Pornography	Sexually explicit text or depictions. Includes explicit anime and cartoons; general explicit depictions; other fetish material; explicit chat rooms; sex simulators; strip poker; adult movies; lewd art; and web-based explicit e-mail.
Unclassified	Websites that are not in the vendor's database are recorded as unclassified for reporting purposes. This category may include mistyped web addresses.